

# News Release



**Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Complex**  
**1000 Auction Road**  
**Fallon, Nevada 89406**

For Immediate Release

**Date:** July 13, 2006  
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## **Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Experiencing Phenomenal Wildlife Production**

This spring, an above average snow pack and high flows in the Carson River created a wildlife boom at Lahontan Valley wetlands, including Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge located 17 miles east of Fallon. According to Refuge Biologist Bill Henry, "The flows contributed to an explosion of aquatic insects and these are being followed by an exceptional nesting effort from Eared and Clark's Grebes, coots and variety of waterfowl. This nesting season looks to be one of the best in 25 years." Henry further explained that this year's abundance of water has enabled him to document several species nesting on the Refuge for the first time in 8 years. These species include: Franklin's gulls, Wilson's phalaropes and Green-winged teal.

The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District coordinated the precautionary release of 100,000 acre-feet which flowed from March through the end of June into Lahontan Valley wetlands and Fallon National Wildlife Refuge, at the end of the Carson River. The release was authorized under BOR policy for the purpose of reducing the threat of downstream flooding. According to Mike Goddard, Stillwater Refuge Project Leader, the wetland acreage in the Refuge this year has been the most he's seen. "I'm excited to see the water come to the marsh this early in the season. The response by birds and plants has been phenomenal". Goddard adds, "I wish every year were like this."

The additional wetland acreage has produced an increase in waterfowl and shorebird nesting habitat, along with increasing foraging habitat and food supplies for all species. "This is definitely a plus for both wildlife and wildlife observers" explains Stillwater's Outdoor Recreation Planner, Janet Schmidt. "Visitors are coming back in from their trips on the Refuge absolutely thrilled about the numbers and types of species they've seen". The early flows of water have also flushed out salts and rejuvenated the marsh, insuring the vigor of spring and summer will last into the fall. The waterfowl hunters should reap additional recreational benefits from the healthy, productive marshes this fall.

In 1990, the Truckee-Carson-Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act directed the Secretary of Interior to acquire sufficient water rights to maintain 25,000 acres of wetlands in the Lahontan Valley. Precautionary releases are a critical component of the wetlands water supply, says Goddard. "If flood releases weren't available for the wetlands, we would have to buy more water to meet Congress' wetlands goals. In our planning, we anticipated receiving 9,700 acre-feet per year on average from releases and spills, and releases or spills would occur every 10 years. We received 100,000 acre-feet this spring, so that puts us right on target for meeting the long term average."

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

*For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Stillwater Refuge, visit our home page at*

<http://stillwater.fws.gov>